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case is cited of a matron who, with a big jugful of water under one arm, raced forty miles to visit a sick friend, catching a hare on the way which she presented as a gift. Surely her foot was not exquisite; it was not according to tradition, for hers is a barefoot race, yet the pair must have had ample opportunity to develop. Perhaps our own are under-developed and our eyes wrong. Certainly our two toes are at no angle at all to our instep, or at an outward angle, which is horrifying to a savage.

To hit what these facts are aiming at: What does a world's championship mean? What does an Olympiad prove? Manifestly the Tarahumares and Seris are not to be judged by our standards and Hans Kohlemainen and Howard Drew, much as we all admire them, have never set a world's record; the truth is, there never was one.

Enrique Cross.



Fight-Nights

(At the Armory A. A.—February 13th)

No one need be lonesome at a fight-club. There is an abundance of fellowship to be borrowed from. There is always someone beside or behind or in front of you with whom you can agree or differ or swap opinions and remarks.

The hollow arching stomach of the house rumbles behind closed doors. One of the naked lads in the ring digs in, swings up a great shovel full of fighting fuel, the door clangs open, the fighting is dashed into the maw of the crowd, a blistering glare of heat gushes out of the open furnace, the roar of it beats through the walls. More fighting, more fellowship. You burn red, everyone burns red. It is fine to be a live coal.

Later: a boy in the ring gets one too many, his knees wobble, the referee steps in. The house subsides into a quiet glow and warms the beaten chap as he feels his way out of the ring. No, you do not have to borrow fellowship. You cannot get away from it.

It is offered, too, in more intimate portions. To every hand of, say six men, there is dealt one who is an authority, one who knows records, terms, and who can be fairly accurate in prophetics. Some of them are genuine,—seasoned pages out of ring-history. You can learn from them, they carry minds full of fingered and thumbed information.

Near us last night, there was a middle-aged sportsman of, I suspect, Irish ancestry. He had a thin flavor of brogue, but it was more his humor and zest that suggested his persuasion. I liked him and liked to turn to him because while he sometimes looked over my head as he had a right to do, he for the most part received my remarks with a genial enthusiasm for every little thing about the ring, no matter how inconsiderable. He admitted me freely to his stores of experience and dignified my own.

Many of these authorities let you climb upon the step and then push you indignantly or contemptuously off. He did not give me a hand but he made no objection when I pulled up beside him, where my small knowledge swelled in my head to considerable bulk. Early in the evening along came Willie Green, a young preliminary boxer, and took the seat beside my genial friend. His small gray eyes had a tolerant glow in them, it was his evening off, and his nose looked as though some foreign means had been used to make it more prominent. He did not cheer or get wild when the mercury of the fighting went up, he was pondering perhaps what he would be doing if he were in there. His remarks were low and restrained, his opinions gained through experience were held in respect. His eyes passed mine by as though it were not necessary to concentrate upon one who was not a ring opponent. He had a great deal more respect, I am sure, for my liberal acquaintance who sat beside him.

But these friends of an evening are at best make-shifts. You learn that by taking a real tried friend with you, as I did last night. I appreciated the difference between a picked-up friend who is prompt to indifference the instant you make a remark that appears absurd to him or hail a bit of action that bores him from having been seen many times before, and one who cannot be indifferent on so trifling a ground because of the broad sea-worthy timbers of the experience you have in common. He was fresh from long abstinence, winced when a balled glove landed on a soft spot, gasped in dismay, and stuck by his favorite with more feeling than judgment. Little flames of sympathy for a bruised eye or lip back-fired his bursts of epic enthusiasm.

From the point of view of the ringsiders it was an attractive

program. But it was not a night to the gallery's taste. I can't blame the gallery when they are bored. They are too far away to appreciate knitting. The fine deft tricks are lost in smoke before they ever catch the eyes dotted along the upper rim. The gallery prefers crazy-quilting, or something equally plain from up there in the clouds. They are not fond of wondering what a man is going to do when he starts to doing something. A lull of studious boxing simply means to them that the fellow is afraid to take a chance. A moment of squinting and puzzling on what it is all about makes the gallery feel that it might as well be at home, it sets them to brooding over the injustice of being penned a mile away in the air because they cannot afford to spend more than a dollar for a seat. Can you blame them for kicking, or for pelting the offender who by his cautious delaying refuses to relieve them from their stale problems, with over-ripe remarks and sulphuretted derision? After all, I must admit, it is results we are looking for when we pay down good money. We about the ringside can stand a delay in the process because we are more comfortable and in a better position to see into the boxer's mind. Let the gallery have its Merry Widow waltz. What if it is a poor tune, and spawned in decay? It is at least an excellent expression when whistled in a dragging chorus, of utter exasperation, the best reflection I know of the luxury of being bored with one's self.

The Merry Widow died once during the quietest of the bouts. I turned and looked up. Then it became still. A yellow light flowed over the dingy ceiling in tints like the gloom of deep-sea water where the last rays of sun struggled. The old gilt wreathes framed in square gilt planes around the front of the gallery, and the row of chins rubbing the worn red plush, were in shadow. Over the first balcony the ceiling was an indescribable pink, a flaunting shade that you see only in a cheap gingham.

"A straight puncher," remarked my sporting acquaintance, smiling with the satisfaction that comes from rolling several hours of enjoyment into a manageable pill. He was right. In three of the four bouts a wide hard swinger was pitted against the "straight puncher," and in two of them the latter won. And in the third the timely hitter had the refrigerator door closed to a crack, his fight cooling off on the shelf, when at the very end of the last round a random punch glanced in and stole the platter.

Something might be said for the youth of it all. Everyone was boyishly young and light-armed. Not one of the eight contenders carried a pound over one hundred and thirty, nor a year above twenty-two. Except possibly Joe Stanton and Leo Crevier, and

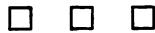
their surplus did not cost them a drop of sweat nor a wrinkle. There was young Shaver O'Brien, (I wonder when he will have his seventeenth birthday?); and Dicky Loadman, (there was never a gayer nineteen-year-old nor one harder to teach that it is not always youth's privilege to win); and Frankie Britt, (there's a boy with faith in his brains, patience and pluck, and a wise knack of economy that is unlike a kid); Dick Thomas, (with a proper Jewish shyness of a hornet's nest, but it does not pay to sting him too often); Charley Miller, (a stuffy lad whose geometry of hitting is confined to two simple angles, out and over); then those two greybeards of twenty-three or thereabouts, Leo Crevier who was embarrassed about something or other, I believe a recent operation on his nose, and could not or would not get started, and Joe Stanton whose choppy rugged hitting power contradicts his skinny frame; and eighth and last, Nap Boutellier, who lost his French tinge and became plain "Butler" in the announcement, which was a bad omen as he lost five and a half rounds of winning work, and his wits, with peace sixty seconds off. All youth, and model youth with good conduct and application to the book showing the way.

The two prettiest, cleanest workmen were Frankie Britt and Shaver O'Brien. Shaver had the least trouble. A diagram of his foot-work would make a sweet pattern. His feet carry him just outside the fringe of danger, his head keeps him balanced and in range for a swift counter. His right hand advanced, jabbing with the speed of a hungry ant-eater, is an awkward style to slip through. And his brain (there's the real battleground!), could pick a yegg-man's pockets of burglar tools and small change while the fellow was adjusting his bullseye. Shaver is so young and getting on so fast that we must all feel like a proud parent, hung up between spur and snaffle. Championships are deceiving, they may be just around the corner, a sprint ahead or a marathon. Shaver is built like a sprinter, therefore let him go! But art is long, Shaver, and artists such as you can be are rare, so take it easy and stay with us.

Dicky Loadman should be at home in THE SOIL. The Steam-Shovel was his godmother. But a Steam-Shovel without an engineer, Dicky, is only human when up against a clever stone-cutter armed with a power-drill, and that is what your face showed us last night when the welcome gong sounded the end of the twelfth. Twenty-two times (I may have lost count) in the first two rounds and a half I looked for the wicker basket to come out from the wings, each time that those banded steel springs in your hunched shoulders shot the resounding belt from the waist up and clipped it to Frankie's jaw and belly. I wonder if your merry grin made them any sweeter.

Such a grin should have won, the victory of youth was in it. But Frankie's youth is not the grinning kind, it is inexorable. I do not recall that Frankie smiled once during the engagement. The gambler can afford to grin at his game. That is one of his flash signals. But the thinker has no time for shows that break his concentration. It is a severe problem, that of balancing the number of those jarring side-swings you can stop while sizing up your man, against the number of rattling jabs and short uppercuts you will pile up when you are ready to attack his combination. Of course, when a man cares nothing what is done to his face like Dick Loadman, the latter part comes easy as soon as he is arm-weary. Yes, Frankie's ledger showed a neat balance on the credit side.

Robert Alden Sanborn.



Hill-Side Tree

Like a drowsy, rain-brown saint
 You squat, and sometimes your voice,
 In which the wind takes no part,
 Is like mists of music wedding each-other . . .
 A drunken, odor-laced peddler, is the morning-wind.
 He brings you golden-scarfed cities
 Whose voices are swirls of bells, burdened with summer;
 And maidens whose hearts are galloping princes.
 And you raise your branches to the sky
 With a whisper that holds the smile you cannot shape.

Maxwell Bodenheim.